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## **Student Research Program in Family Medicine**

**James J. Diamond, PhD\***

\* Thomas Jefferson University

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## Student Research Program in Family Medicine

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Since 1988, the faculty in the Department of Family Medicine has worked with JMC students in a Summer Assistantship program designed to introduce them to the world of academic family practice. There are four components to the program: didactic sessions, active research, clinical observation, and presentations. The fourteen didactic sessions cover research methods, research design, statistical analysis, and several specific primary care issues such as family medicine as a career, and rural practice. Clinical time offers some grounding in real-life family practice and consists of observing faculty who are providing patient care in the Family Practice Center, and accompanying the department's Home Visit team.

In the summer of 1995, nine students who had completed their first year at Jefferson were selected from among the group of 30 who had applied. The program is full-time for the summer and includes a stipend. This program gives the student an opportunity for immersion in a clinical and academic department and allows them to make substantial progress toward completing a research project. While there are exceptions, the projects are typically self-contained, designed with a primary care focus that allows the students to be part of the team and to work closely with their research mentor.

The nine projects for 1995, the students and their mentors were:

Screening for Hypertension in the Community  
Vincent Anthony  
Michael P. Rosenthal, MD

Family Physicians' Propensity to Prescribe Drugs to the Elderly  
Lori Brand  
Karen D. Novielli, MD

Attitudes and Beliefs of Family Physicians Regarding Telemedicine  
Elizabeth Dirnberger

John L. Randall, MD

Specialty Selection Factors Among Jefferson Medical Students  
Ed Harding  
Fred W. Markham, MD

Making Effective Referrals in a Managed Care System  
Jonathan S. Harris  
James D. Plumb, MD

Attitudes Regarding Advance Directives  
Ed King  
Robert L. Perkel, MD

James J. Diamond: Student Research Program in Family Medicine

Assessment of Obesity in a Family Practice Setting  
Robert Noll  
James S. Studdiford, MD

Factors Patients Consider in Contraception Choice  
Jennifer Parish  
Leslie A. Everts, MD

Perception of Health-Related Community Problems  
Melanie Pogach  
Randa D. Sifri, MD

The final activity required of each student is a formal presentation of their project to the department. This is conducted as it would be at a national meeting, with a fixed time period as well as questions from the audience.

The students are evaluated on their progress and they, in turn, evaluate the program. We find that the students rate it highly, but each year do provide valuable suggestions, as well. Long-term, we know that many of the participants enter primary care residencies. We view the program as part of the experiences that help shape their specialty choice decisions.

### **About the Author**

James J. Diamond, PhD, is Director of Research in the Department of Family Medicine, Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University.